

## Recommended Reading List:        **Secrets.....**

<https://www.grc.qld.gov.au/homepage/108/library-lovers-book-group-online>

### Fiction

#### ***The Secrets of the Huon Wren* / Claire Van Ryn    2023**

Senior journalist Allira is writing a story for Folk magazine when she meets Nora, a nursing home resident with dementia and a doll cradled lovingly in her arms. Bit by bit, Nora reveals details about her younger life as a spirited teenage girl living beneath the Great Western Tiers in Tasmania's heartland, of stitching linings into coffins, of her illicit romance with a charming Polish-German migrant, and of a family torn apart by heartbreak. As the two women form an unlikely friendship, Allira becomes helplessly drawn into the old woman's story. When Allira opens up to Nora about her own recent tragedy, the secrets embedded in the story of a carved Huon pine wren become the key to a life-changing discovery from the past. It is a revelation that finally fills in the missing pieces of Nora's history and has the power to set them both free. Set among the picturesque mountain ranges of Tasmania's Central Highlands, and moving between the 1950s and the present day, *The Secrets of the Huon Wren* is a lyrical and highly evocative story about two lives connected by a shared tragedy, and a universal love.

#### ***The Bookshop of Secrets* / Mollie Rushmeyer    2022**

A collection of lost books holds the clues to her family's legacy and her future. Hope Sparrow has mastered the art of outrunning her tragic past. Never stay anywhere too long, never allow anyone control over her life again. Coming to Wanishin Falls in search of her family's history already feels too risky. But somewhere in the towering stacks of this dusty old bookshop are the books that hold Hope's last ties to her late mother - and to a rumoured family treasure that could help her start over. Only, the bookshop is in shambles, and the elderly owner is in the beginning stages of dementia and can't remember where the books lie. To find the last links to the loved ones she lost, Hope must stay and accept help from the townsfolk to locate the treasured volumes. Each secret she uncovers brings her closer to understanding where she came from. But the longer she stays in the quaint town, the more people find their way into the cracks in her heart. And letting them in may be the greatest risk of all.

#### ***The Secrets of Sainte Madeleine* / Tilly Bagshawe    2022**

Elise would do anything to inherit Sainte Madeleine, the vineyard that's been home to the Salignacs for generations. Only Laurent Senard, a distant cousin, is a rival for her heart - yet when a family rift sends her on a new and dangerous path, she risks losing them both. Laurent Senard's love for Elise was planted at Sainte Madeleine long ago. But with the shadow of war sweeping over Europe, Laurent must leave France to fight. Through the years of longing, secrecy and tragedy that follow, he vows to find his way back - if only it isn't too late.

#### ***Inheritance of Secrets* / Sonya Bates    2020**

Juliet's elderly grandparents are killed in their Adelaide home. Who would commit such a heinous crime - and why? The only clue is her grandfather Karl's missing signet ring. When Juliet's estranged sister, Lily, returns in fear for her life, Juliet suspects something far more sinister than a simple break-in gone wrong. Before Juliet can get any answers, Lily vanishes once more. What secrets did Karl Weiss have that could have led to his murder? A German soldier who migrated to Adelaide, Juliet knew Karl as a loving grandfather. Is it possible he was hiding a dark past? While attempting to find out, Juliet uncovers some disturbing secrets from WWII Germany that will put both her and her sister's lives in danger.

***Secrets My Father Kept* / Rachel Givney 2021**

It's April 1939. As the Fuhrer edges towards an invasion of Poland, total war looms in Europe. However in Krakow, seventeen-year-old Marie Karska's primary concern is the unexplained disappearance of her mother fifteen years ago, and her father Dominik's unbreakable silence on the matter. Even his wife's name is a secret he guards closely. Dominik, a well-respected and innovative doctor at the local hospital, has devoted his life to caring for his only daughter. Yet a black fear haunts him, over the questionable act he committed to keep Marie safe. And with German troops now marching to the border, he needs to find her a husband. One who will protect her when he no longer can. But Marie has already met the man she wants to marry- her childhood friend Ben. She's determined that his Jewish faith won't stand in the way of their future together. And nor will her father's refusal to explain the past stop her from unpicking his darkest secret.

***The Secrets of Strangers* / Charity Norman 2020**

A regular weekday morning veers drastically off-course for a group of strangers whose paths cross in a London cafe - their lives never to be the same again when an apparently crazed gunman holds them hostage. But there is more to the situation than first meets the eye and as the captives grapple with their own inner demons, the line between right and wrong starts to blur. Will the secrets they keep stop them from escaping with their lives?

***Dirty Little Secrets* / Jo Spain 2019**

Six neighbours, six secrets, six reasons to want Olive Collins dead. In the exclusive gated community of Withered Vale, people's lives appear as perfect as their beautifully manicured lawns. Money, success, privilege - the residents have it all. Life is good. There's just one problem. Olive Collins' dead body has been rotting inside number four for the last three months. Her neighbours say they're shocked at the discovery, but nobody thought to check on her when she vanished from sight. The police start to ask questions, and the seemingly flawless facade begins to crack. Because when it comes to Olive's neighbours, it seems each of them has something to hide, something to lose and everything to gain from her death.

***Secrets in the Cotswolds* / Rebecca Tope 2019**

Thea Slocombe is tired of having to entertain Drew's children through the long summer holiday while he works, so keenly accepts a commission to watch over a house in Barnsley. However, her return to house-sitting is far from relaxing as on her first night she finds a fugitive woman hiding among some bushes. The woman's story is thin and incoherent, but Thea agrees to offer her sanctuary for the night. When the woman is found dead the next morning Thea turns to the police for help, but their preoccupation with a major animal trafficking investigation means she is effectively on her own. As she digs deeper into the dead woman's background, she discovers a tangled web of lies, secrets and at least three very likely suspects.

***The Secrets We Kept* / Lara Prescott 2019**

1956. A celebrated Russian author is writing a book, *Doctor Zhivago*, which could spark dissent in the Soviet Union. The Soviets, afraid of its subversive power, ban it. But in the rest of the world it's fast becoming a sensation. In Washington DC, the CIA is planning to use the book to tip the Cold War in its favour. Their agents are not the usual spies, however. Two typists – the charming, experienced Sally and the talented novice Irina – are charged with the mission of a lifetime: to smuggle *Doctor Zhivago* back into Russia by any means necessary. It will not be easy. There are people prepared to die for this book – and agents willing to kill for it. But they cannot fail – as this book has the power to change history.

***The Kinship of Secrets : a novel / Eugenia Kim* 2018**

The riveting story of two sisters, one raised in the United States, the other in South Korea, and the family that bound them together even as the Korean War kept them apart. In 1948 Najin and Calvin Cho, with their young daughter Miran, travel from South Korea to the United States in search of new opportunities. Wary of the challenges ahead, Najin and Calvin make the difficult decision to leave their other daughter, Inja, behind with their extended family; soon, they hope, they will return to her. But then war breaks out in Korea, and there is no end in sight to the separation. Miran grows up in prosperous American suburbia, under the shadow of the daughter left behind, as Inja grapples in her war-torn land with ties to a family she doesn't remember. Najin and Calvin desperately seek a reunion with Inja, but are the bonds of love strong enough to reconnect their family over distance, time and war? And as deep family secrets are revealed, will everything they long for be upended? Told through the alternating perspectives of the distanced sisters, and inspired by a true story, this book explores the cruelty of war, the power of hope, and what it means to be a sister.

***Silkworm Secrets / Lea Davey* 2017**

A treehouse perched high in a giant mulberry tree provides a safe place for Bobby, and gives him solace from a disintegrating home life. His best friend Ruby considers it only as a place to play, to raise silkworms and to innocently view the events that take place in the yards nearby. Ruby's simple, family life however, is a far cry from what Bobby endures in the house next door and the secrets they share and events that they witness will not only impact their lives as children but also re-connect them as adults. *Silkworm Secrets* exposes the secrets that children keep, the consequences of a troubled family life, but more importantly the endurance of beautiful family relationships and the power of friendship and love to overcome the past.

***The Secrets of Midwives / Sally Hepworth* 2015**

Three generations of women. Secrets in the present and from the past. A captivating tale of life, loss, and love... Neva Bradley, a third-generation midwife, is determined to keep the details surrounding her own pregnancy - including the identity of the baby's father - hidden from her family and co-workers for as long as possible. Her mother, Grace, finds it impossible to let this secret rest. The more Grace prods, the tighter Neva holds to her story, and the more the lifelong differences between private, quiet Neva and open, gregarious Grace strain their relationship.

***Family Secrets / Liz Byrski* 2014**

When patriarch Gerald Hawkins passes away in his Tasmanian home, after ten years of serious illness, his family experience a wave of grief and, admittedly, a surge of relief. Gerald's dominating personality has loomed large over his wife, Connie, their children, Andrew and Kerry, and his sister Flora, for decades. Connie, whose own dreams were dispensed with upon marriage, is now determined to renew her long friendship with Gerald's estranged sister, Flora. She travels to France where she finds Flora struggling to make peace with the past and searching for a place to call home. Meanwhile Andrew's marriage is crumbling, and Kerry is trapped in stasis by unfinished business with her father. As the family adjusts to life after Gerald, they could not be more splintered. But there are surprises in store and secrets to unravel.

***A Place of Secrets / Rachel Hore* 2010**

As a child, Jude suffered a recurrent nightmare: running through a dark forest, crying for her mother. Now her six-year-old niece, Summer, is having the same dream, and Jude is frightened for her. A successful auctioneer, Jude is struggling to come to terms with the death of her husband. When she's asked to value a collection of scientific instruments and manuscripts belonging to Anthony Wickham, a lonely 18th-century astronomer, she leaps at the chance to escape London for the untamed beauty of Norfolk, where she grew up. As Jude untangles Wickham's tragic story, she discovers threatening links to the present.

## **Non Fiction**

### ***Grave Secrets : giving victims a voice through forensics / Meshel Laurie 2023***

Grave Secrets is a gripping account of the work of the forensic scientists on the frontline of Australia's major crime and disaster investigations. They are part of the team at the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine (VIFM), a state-of-the-art facility in Melbourne. VIFM is a world-renowned centre of forensic science, and its team members have led major recovery operations over the years, from the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami to the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires to the 2014 shooting down of flight MH17 and the Whakaari / White Island volcano eruption of 2019. VIFM forensics experts have also played pivotal roles in some of Australia's highest-profile homicide cases, including the Frankston Serial Killer, the murders of Eurydice Dixon, Aya Maasarwe and Sisto Malaspina, and the arrest of convicted serial killer Peter Dupas. After reading Grave Secrets you'll never read another homicide headline without wondering about the forensic pathologist who happened to be on call, the evidence they found and the truth they

### ***The Plant Thieves : secrets of the herbarium / Prudence Gibson 2023***

Who gets to collect plants, name them, propagate them, extract their chemicals, sell them and use them? Whose knowledge is it? And what can the people that work with plants, just outside the law, teach us about plant care? In The Plant Thieves, Prudence Gibson explores the secrets of the National Herbarium of New South Wales and unearths remarkable stories of plant naming wars, rediscovered lost species, First Nations agriculture, illegal drug labs and psychoactive plant knowledge. She also follows the story of the black bean Songline, a recent collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers, to find the route of this important agriculture plant. The Plant Thieves is both a lament for lost and disappearing species and a celebration of being human, of wanting to collect things and of learning more about plant life and ourselves.

### ***Revealing Secrets : an unofficial history of Australian Signals intelligence & the advent of cyber / John Blaxland & Clare Birgin 2023***

For a long time, the Australian Signals intelligence (or Sigint) story has been kept secret. Until now. Why does Australia have a national signals intelligence agency? What does it do and why is it controversial? And how significant are its ties with key partners, the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and New Zealand, to this arrangement? Revealing Secrets is a compelling account of Australian Signals intelligence, its efforts at revealing the secrets of other nations, and keeping ours safe. It brings to light those clever Australians whose efforts were for so long entirely unknown or overlooked. Blaxland and Birgin traverse the royal commissions and reviews that shaped Australia's intelligence community in the 20th century and consider the advent and the impact of cyber. In unearthing this integral, if hidden and little understood, part of Australian statecraft, this book increases our understanding of the past, present and what lies ahead.

### ***The Opera House : the extraordinary story of the building that symbolises Australia the people, the secrets, the scandals and the sheer genius / Peter FitzSimons 2022***

The Sydney Opera House is a breathtaking building, recognised around the world as a symbol of modern Australia. But this stunning house on Bennelong Point also holds many secrets and scandals. In his gripping biography, Peter FitzSimons marvels at how this magnificent building came to be, details its enthralling history and reveals the dramatic stories and hidden secrets about the people whose lives have been affected, both negatively and positively, by its presence. He shares how a conservative 1950s state government had the incredible vision and courage to embark on this nation-defining structure; how an architect from Denmark and construction workers from Australia and abroad invented new techniques to bring it to completion; how ambition, betrayal, professional rivalry, sexual intrigue, murder, bullying and breakdowns are woven into its creation; and how it is now acknowledged as one of the wonders and masterpieces of human ingenuity.

***Australia's Secret Army : the story of the Coastwatchers, the unsung heroes of Australia's armed forces during World War II / Michael Veitch 2022***

Hidden deep in the jungles and high in the mountains of the Southwest Pacific during World War II, Australia's secret army - the Coastwatchers - reported every move of the Japanese invaders to Allied intelligence. Following World War I, the Coastwatcher organisation was formed from European planters, missionaries and patrol officers living in New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. All volunteers, they were tasked with keeping an eye on Australia's porous northern border and providing early warnings via radio. When World War II came to the Pacific, however, overnight the Coastwatchers found themselves no longer just observers but spies operating behind enemy lines. Besides evading the enemy's desperate efforts to hunt them down, the Coastwatchers battled exhaustion, tropical diseases and malnutrition, as well as the ever-present spectre of capture, torture and death. Yet without the Coastwatchers' crucial courage and intelligence, key moments of the Pacific War may have turned out very differently.

***Harlem Nights : the secret history of Australia's Jazz age / Deirdre O'Connell 2021***

The untold story of race and power in Australia's Jazz Age The 1920s were a time of wonder and flux, when Australians sensed a world growing smaller, turning faster-and, for some, skittering off balance. American movies, music and dance brought together what racial lines kept apart. A spirit of youthful rebellion collided with the promise of racial perfectibility, stirring deep anxieties in white nationalists and moral reformers. African-American jazz represented the type of modernism that cosmopolitan Australians craved-and the champions of White Australia feared. Enter Sonny Clay's Colored Idea. Snuck in under the wire by an astute promoter, the Harlem-style revue broke from the usual blackface minstrel fare, delivering sophisticated, liberating rhythms. The story of their Australian tour is a tale of conspiracy-a secret plan to kick out and keep out 'undesirable' expressions of modernism, music and race.

***Dark Secrets : the true story of murder in HMAS Australia / Robert Hadler 2020***

A dark secret lurked aboard HMAS Australia, the flagship of the Royal Australian Navy. In 1942, with a Japanese invasion looming, those aboard the ship were shocked and completely unprepared to deal with the brutal murder of a young sailor by two shipmates who were allegedly part of a homosexual group on the flagship. A swift military investigation and court martial were conducted. The officers faced a difficult, almost impossible task. How were they to prove the guilt of sailors accused of murdering a shipmate without exposing the motive for the crime, which would unleash embarrassing propaganda onto the world for the enemy to exploit? This would prove to be one of the most controversial events in the history of the Royal Australian Navy and trigger unprecedented legal and political events.

***The Other Side of Absence : discovering my father's secrets / Betty O'Neill 2020***

Betty O'Neill grew up knowing very little about her father, Antoni. She knew that he had fled Poland after World War Two, that he had disappeared overnight when she was just an infant, and that his brief reappearance when she was a young adult had been a harrowing, painful ordeal. Fifty-five years after he deserted her family, Betty is determined to find out more. What drove him to abandon them, twice? What was his story? Who was Antoni Jagielski? Her search for truth takes Betty to Poland, where she unexpectedly inherits a family apartment from the half sister she never knew, a time capsule of her father's life. Sifting through photos and letters she begins to piece together a picture of her father as a Polish resistance fighter, a survivor of Auschwitz and Gusen concentration camps, an exile in post-war England, and a migrant to Australia. But the deeper she searches, the darker the revelations about her father become, as Betty is faced with disturbing truths buried within her family. Honest, compelling, and meticulously researched, *The Other Side of Absence* is an elegant debut memoir of resilience and strength, and of a daughter reconciling the damage that families inherit from war.

***Roadies : the secret history of Australian rock 'n' roll / Stuart Coupe 2018***

This is your backstage pass to the hidden side of the music industry - the tantrums, the fights, the tensions, the indulgence, the sex, the alcohol, the drugs, the overdoses. The roadies see it all, and now they are sharing their secrets. Roadies are the unsung heroes of the Australian music industry. They unload the PAs and equipment, they set it all up, they make sure everything is running totally smoothly before, during and after the gigs. Then they pack everything up in the middle of the night, put it in the back of the truck and hit the road to another town - to do it all over again. They are there at the pre- and post-show parties. They silently bear witness to overdoses, the groupies, the obsessive fans. They are part of - and often organise - all the craziness that goes on behind the scenes of the concerts and pub gigs you go to. From The Rolling Stones to AC/DC, Bob Marley to Courtney Love, Sherbet to The Ted Mulry Gang, INXS to Blondie - these guys have seen it all. And now they're talking. The Roadies' Creed: If it's wet, drink it. If it's dry, smoke it. If it moves, \*\*\*\* it. If it doesn't move, throw it in the back of the truck.

***This is Going to Hurt : secret diaries of a junior doctor / Adam Kay 2018***

As soon as Adam Kay set foot on a hospital ward for the first time, he realised there's quite a lot they don't teach you at medical school ... His diaries from the NHS front line - scribbled in secret after long nights, endless days and missed weekends - are hilarious, horrifying and heartbreaking by turns. This Is Going to Hurt is everything you wanted to know about being a junior doctor, and more than a few things you really didn't. And yes, it may leave a scar.

***Australian Gypsies : their secret history / Mandy Sayer 2017***

Since the arrival of the First Fleet there have been Gypsies in Australia, yet their experiences have never been included in any official histories. In Australian Gypsies, award-winning memoirist and novelist Mandy Sayer weaves together a vivid, wide-ranging history that begins with the roots of the Romani culture, tracing the first Gypsy people to arrive in Australia (including James Squire, the colony's first brewer) through to Gypsy families today, who share the stories of their ancestors and their lives. With her unconventional, nomadic early life, Mandy Sayer has a unique insight into the lives of the people she meets, and a strong sense of the importance of their history. Given their blessing to tell their stories, Sayer also demolishes some longstanding but baseless myths along the way.

***The Mistress of Paris : the 19th-century courtesan who built an empire on a secret / Catherine Hewitt 2015***

Valtesse de la Bigne was a celebrated nineteenth-century Parisian courtesan. She was painted by Manet and inspired Emile Zola, who immortalised her in his scandalous novel Nana. Her rumoured affairs with Napoleon III and the future Edward VII kept gossip columns full. But her glamorous existence hid a dark secret: she was no Comtesse. She was born into abject poverty, raised on a squalid Paris backstreet; the lowest of the low. Yet she transformed herself into an enchantress who possessed a small fortune, three mansions, fabulous carriages, and art the envy of connoisseurs across Europe. A consummate show-woman, she ensured that her life - and even her death - remained shrouded in just enough mystery to keep her audience hungry for more. Catherine Hewitt's biography tells, for the first time ever in English, the forgotten story of a remarkable woman who, though her roots were lowly, never stopped aiming high.

***Secrets, Spies & Spotted Dogs / Jane Eales 2016***

A simple need for her birth certificate leads Jane, aged 19, to a devastating secret: she is adopted. Stunned, Jane is sworn to secrecy and forbidden to search for her biological family - a promise she honours until her adoptive parents die. A heart-wrenching family crisis and a longing to know her origins leads Jane into a life-changing quest to research her roots in Rhodesia, Johannesburg, London, Berlin and Sydney.